

NOTES ON BLEPHARIDA DOROTHEA MIGNOT
(COLEOPTERA: CHRYSOMELIDAE)¹

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Hicks (1955) recognized two forms of *Blepharida rhois* (Forster), a rather common species on sumac, which he designated as the blotched form and the striped form. Mignot (1971) described the blotched form as a new species *Blepharida dorothea* which ranges from New Jersey to Florida in the east and is widely distributed in Florida.

Mignot states that the adults of *Blepharida dorothea* have been collected on several species of *Rhus* also on *Pinus palustris* and *Schinus* spp. Although *Rhus copalina* occurs on the Archbold Biological Station grounds, Highlands County Florida, where detailed observations were made by the author, *B. dorothea* has not been noted on this host. It is interesting to note that Brazilian pepper *Schinus terebinthifolius* and sumac *Rhus* spp. belong to the *Anacardiaceae* and it is not strange that this beetle may occur on both. For the same reason it might be expected on cashew.

The larvae and adults of *B. dorothea* have been observed frequently feeding on the leaves of Brazilian pepper and have been reared on the leaves of this host. Adults have been taken occasionally in light traps and one adult was collected on periwinkle *Vinca rosea*. *B. dorothea* was observed from December 11 to April 8 representing at least a part of its life history.

The larvae and adults of *B. dorothea* closely resemble those of *B. rhois*, however, the latter does not occur in Florida. A few notes were

¹Accepted for publication: September 21, 1971 [3.0139].

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obtained on the development of *B. dorothea*. The eggs of this species have not been observed. The species was first noticed when groups of newly-hatched larvae were feeding on the leaves of Brazilian pepper. They attracted attention because they were covered with shiny black fecula, also because several writers state that no insects are known to attack this host. The young larva tends to be less curved than the more mature larva and the abdomen is distinctly broader especially at the posterior end than the head and the thorax. The mature larva is distinctly curved, gray in color, and from 10 to 12 mm. long. The head and legs are dark brown, almost black. The thoracic shield is lighter brown with a very narrow central yellow line. The setae are generally short and weak. Pairs of setae on the dorsal aspect of the thoracic and several abdominal segments are stronger. The

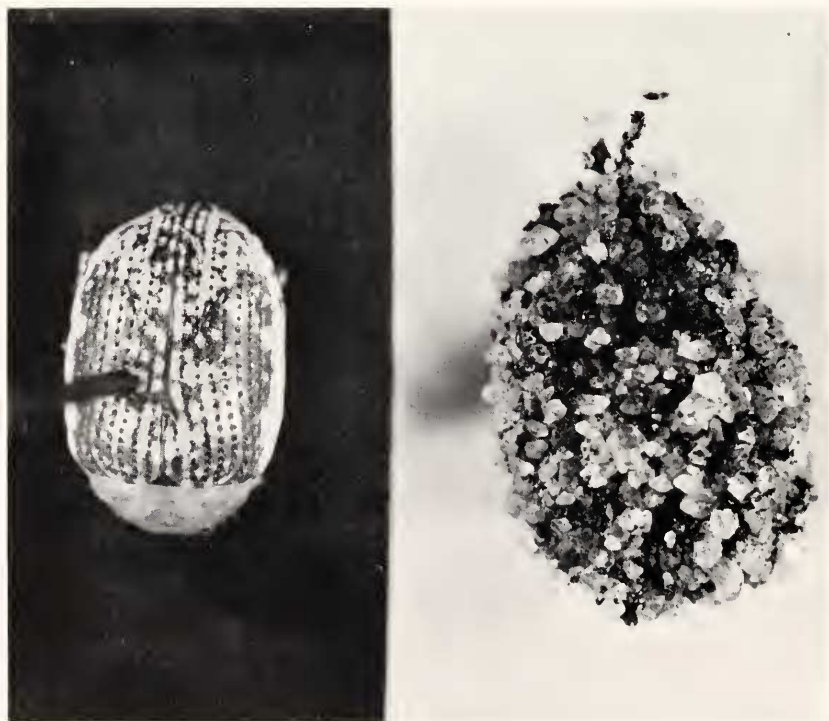


FIGURE 1. *Blepharida dorothea* Mignot, cocoon and adult $\times 6\frac{1}{2}$.

thoracic and eight abdominal spiracles are surrounded by conspicuous dark rings. The lateral margins of the thoracic segments are somewhat lobed and bear v-shaped brown marks.

The larvae eat numerous holes through the leaves usually leaving the stronger veins. Often nearly the whole leaf may be injured in this fashion. The adults apparently do not feed on the leaves but are found on the foliage shortly after emerging from their cocoons.

One mature larva, recovered from a cocoon, revealed a circular hole three times the diameter of a spiracle and immediately above the first abdominal spiracle. This was apparently produced by a predator.

The cocoon (Fig. 1) is oval in shape 9 mm. long and formed in the soil of a mixture of sand and fecula giving it a blackish appearance. The adult (Fig. 1) is 6 mm. long and has been accurately described by Mignot.

LITERATURE CITED

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2.0139 Notes on *Blepharida dorothea* Mignot (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae).

ABSTRACT.—*Blepharida dorothea* occurs in Florida on the leaves of Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) and the larvae have been reared on this species.—S. W. FROST, Department of Entomology, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802.

Descriptors: Coleoptera; Chrysomelidae; *Blepharida dorothea*, in Florida.